

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Opinion Report on Attitude of Czechs towards Present Regime and Future Government

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1. When travelling through Czechoslovakia today, one finds many more contrast - ing opinions than might be expected. It is necessary to realize what is ac - tually happening in Czechoslovakia, not only from the political and economic points of view but, and this is most important, from the point of view of the change in the soul and opinions of the average Czech citizen. At this time-- two years after February 1948--if one were able to look into the soul of the Czech citizen, one would find only chaos.
2. It is difficult to say of what the Czech people are thinking and what their opinions are. It must not be forgotten that the average Czech went through the very unpleasant ordeal of the occupation which very strongly undermined his stability, and that the Czech nation was exhausted after the war and needed nursing and a gradual convalescence. Instead, it received another heavy blow. There really is not a single satisfied person in all of Czecho - slovakia, even if some individuals--and there are very few of them--might claim this. Aside from the main and basic reasons of dissatisfaction, lack of freedom and fear, there are additional reasons such as exhaustion and dis - appointment. The people at home are worn out, morally exhausted and disappointed, not only by present events but also by all they have had to endure during the past years. There is no need to emphasize that the Czech people do not want this political situation or its present government. This is a fact beyond doubt, and there are very few who would take exception.
3. What is the wish of the Czechs? Do they long for a return to the past? They do not. Why? Can they no longer remember their untarnished President Masaryk? The example of past days has remained and Masaryk is alive, perhaps more than ever before, as a symbol of truth and democracy. Unfortunately there is another reminder of the past which the people at home still retain: unemployment and economic crisis. They all experienced the beautiful and pleasant life under freedom, but there were some who exploited this basic quality of life for their own gain to such an extent that although the weaker element lived in freedom, it was hardly able to support itself. This shadow over that beautiful and great period, this festering sore on the young body of the Republic, is the cause for the present change in the opinion of the people, and this is how deeply the roots of the present situation extend.
4. In spite of the love and sympathy for the past, it must be admitted that al - though it was a period of great freedom and opportunity, there

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was a lack of perfect humaneness. Those powerful and ruthless persons who exploited all opportunities afforded by this freedom never considered whether others could live decently. No one noticed or considered the next fellow; no one understood the weaker, less energetic person. Of course it is not just, correct, or humane for the weaker and less able to suffer because stronger individuals do not heed even basic human needs. Are not the weaker entitled to a decent life, even if they lack the strength and ability to fight for it? Like any human being, they have other good qualities.

5. This failure is used by the Communists most of all and has been their strongest propaganda weapon. They utilized it even at the trial of Dr. Milada Horakova. This beautiful and glowing example of a heroic woman, with her firm statement that she would remain faithful to the bequest and teachings of T.G. Masaryk, made a great impression upon everyone, even upon the members of the Communist Party; but the organizers of the trial attempted to belittle her by linking her with persons who reminded the Czechs of the previous ruthlessness of individuals. Therefore, the Czechs are confused. The road to the old way of life is empty and, with the exception of a few, no one seeks it. The past is unconditionally behind the people, and nothing is left but the great moral and spiritual bequest of Masaryk.
6. Today, two years after the February events, the Czechs must acknowledge this reality and face it even if they do not like it. It is useless to seek for or imagine something pleasant that no longer exists. These are times of uncertainty and evolution.
7. What is the solution? It is to find a way out of this confusion, to state the basic aims for a new and future life in Czechoslovakia; to find a perspective which would bring new hope for all, or at least to the majority, for a better, just, and more peaceful life. Here lies the problem to the whole situation in Czechoslovakia.
8. After the new, free way of life in Czechoslovakia is determined, there must be included some measures which undoubtedly helped the Communists immensely and which even today they are using fully. It does not appear that the Communists in Czechoslovakia maintain their power only by force, the secret police and the SHP. Apart from these means, there are other very effective measures which help them stay in power. One realizes this only if one lives in Czechoslovakia and studies the thinking of the people. The most important measures are the law assuring employment to every citizen and the law providing national insurance. Source must state that these measures, at least for the present, help maintain the Communists in power more than do strong police action; he is convinced of this beyond any doubt. He is not of course thinking of the forced labor by those unfortunates who are unjustly persecuted by the regime. He has in mind free choice of employment, and up to now the majority of the people still have the opportunity to work at jobs they select. It is true that today there are no unemployed or partly unemployed in the country. When one talks to the man on the street, one hears that apart from slavery and force, he fears unemployment most. To all the criticism and condemnation of various Communist methods--and source has heard such criticisms--the Communists, after ineffectively trying all other means, still succeed with this final argument: "Do you want the return of those times when you could be fired at any time? Do you want again to live through the days of unemployment?" [REDACTED] the challenge concerning national insurance equally effective.

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the position of this terrible regime even though such a large number of Czechs are knowingly paying a high price for them--their freedom. People are really afraid of unemployment. It is a pity that these effective measures were not at the disposal of democracy long before February 1948 so that the present rulers in Czechoslovakia might have been prevented from using them in such a terrible manner to exploit the freedom of the Czech nation. The Czech people would like to be assured that the longed-for freedom will not bring with it times of economic disturbance and the struggle for a minimum existence because they are already very exhausted.

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10. Concerning the opinion of the Czech people on international matters, a much clearer picture exists. Everyone is well aware of the ruthless exploitation of Czechoslovakia by the USSR and the use of Czech industry only for war preparations by the leaders in the Kremlin. On this subject the opinions are uniform. There is no uncertainty but rather a firm although negative stand on the part of the whole nation which is united against the terrible and for Czechoslovakia, destructive "friendship" of the USSR. The hatred of this eastern neighbor and its leaders is alike among all classes of the population, as it was of the Germans during the war. There is not the slightest doubt about this. It is difficult to find in Czechoslovakia a true supporter and enthusiast of the USSR and its horrible leaders, in spite of the great effort and servility shown by the Prague regime to the USSR. These signs of impotence of the Czech Communists are repugnant to every Czech.
11. The stand on war is a very negative one and the feelings in Czechoslovakia are against war. It is not possible to conceive of anyone fighting for Soviet interests; [REDACTED] Nor is there any desire to go to war for any other reason. The army is certainly unreliable for war purposes. There is a great desire, however, to be rid of the Soviet influence. There is also great sympathy among all classes for a unification of Europe. The idea of a United States of Europe, without any borders and obstacles between nations, dominates everyone's thinking and is spreading like wildfire. This unification is really the wish of all, and today the Czechs are more Europe-minded than ever before. In this respect, source believes that the foreign radio could well serve to spread information on the future disposition of affairs in Europe and on the inclusion of Czechoslovakia, which is so well situated in Europe, into the new framework. State borders in Europe must be abolished. Everyone is aware of this need, and perhaps never before have the Czechs craved freedom of movement so much.
12. It is also necessary to discuss the results achieved by the present foreign broadcasts in Czechoslovakia. Is it right to tell the Czechs about their lack of freedom, about the injustice in the country, about all they must suffer, when they themselves live under these conditions? Everyone in Czechoslovakia encounters this lack of freedom daily, he finds obstacles constantly in his way, and his nerves are weakened by fear. Is it right for such a person, when he turns on his radio in the evening after a full day of troubles, moral lashing, meetings and reeducation, to hear from abroad what he himself has faced all day? Does he have to relive this terrible and dark present which he, the ordinary Czech worker, knows much better than all the people abroad? Does he want to know how many Communists there are in the country when he himself is a member of the party which he hates and when at present he is surrounded by Communist schooling, fulfillment of plans, competition to outdo the others, and pretense at being an ardent Communist?
13. Will these reports on the present terrible situation in Czechoslovakia take him away from all these errors and disturbances? Will his sufferings be lessened by being repeatedly told what he has to go through every day? Unfortunately all this is well known to the average person. What can give him strength and from where should he acquire hope for a better future?
14. One leaves Czechoslovakia with mixed feelings. Where is Czechoslovakia going and what do the people expect of the future? Every Czech is tired of politics, political maneuvering, and mutual attacks. Daily he observes nothing but attacks, criticism and swearing. He would like to know that there is a new era in the offing, a period of decency, without hatred, a period of true freedom and humanity. Important to the man on the street is security in his job and thus no worry about unemployment. The Czech citizen craves peace; he wants to be rid not only of all terror and lack of freedom but of all political quarreling. He wants a job so that he can earn a decent living for himself and his family. The people are looking forward to a united, free Europe without frontiers, without enemies, and without hatred.
15. Source believes that these are the wishes of the majority of the people, after all their disappointments resulting from political quarrels. In spite of all the present horror, hatred and injustice, a new life is being born from the sufferings of the past years. The Czechs should learn from their past and include in the new life all that is beautiful and valuable which gave them strength during the difficult days; they must avoid all those mistakes that caused the present situation. Masaryk's "Christ, not Caesar" applies today and will apply in the future.

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